

Videotaped Remarks to America's Military and Their Families *April 14, 2003*

My fellow citizens:

When freedom needs defending, America turns to our military. I want to thank those who wear our uniform. Thank you for your sacrifice. And as our men and women in uniform do their job, they count on their families. This time of war has been a time of hardship for many military families. Some of you have been separated from your loved ones by long deployments. You're dealing with added burdens at home while praying for your husband or wife, son or daughter, father or mother far from home. All of America is grateful for your sacrifice.

Over the last few weeks, the world has witnessed what you already know, that our Armed Forces act with great skill and great courage and great humanity. Images of the Iraqi people welcoming our troops in cities across that country are a testament to the character of our men and women in uniform.

Our forces have been given a clear mission, to end a regime that threatened its neighbors and the world with weapons of mass destruction and to free a people that had suffered far too long. American and coalition forces are treating innocent civilians with kindness, delivering urgently needed food and medicine, and acting in the highest traditions of the United States military. Our whole Nation is proud of the honorable conduct of our military, and I am proud to be your Commander in Chief.

All who wear this Nation's uniform have chosen to serve in America's defense and in freedom's cause. You and your families deserve the gratitude of the Nation and the full support of our Government. We will give you the tools and training you need to win our Nation's battles. And we will keep our commitment to improving the quality of life for our military families.

This Nation has made another pledge: We will never forget the men and women who have fallen in service to America. We owe them our freedom. And we pray that their loved ones will receive God's comfort and God's grace.

All of you know that great military successes comes from years of hard work, training, and commitment. You stand tall in times of conflict, and you stand ready in times of peace. For your daily effort, for your professionalism, and for your patriotism, I thank you on behalf of the people of the United States.

May God bless our country and all who defend her.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 10:20 a.m. on April 11 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The videotape was played in the Press Secretary's press gaggle on April 14, and copies were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary, but the transcript was not issued as a White House press release. A Spanish language transcript of these remarks was also made available.